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The Commonweal

September 16, 1949

Argentine Picture

Charles Henry Lee

Somerset Maugham

Walter O'Hearn

VOLUME L

15c

NUMBER 23

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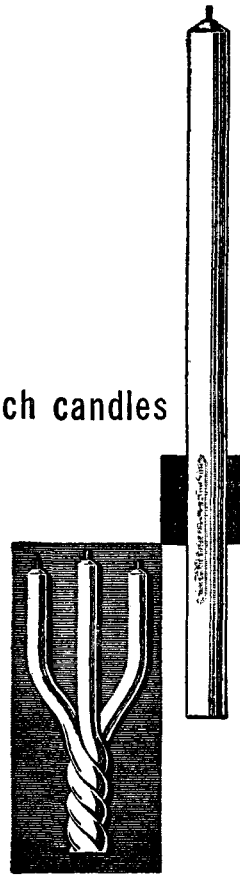

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The
COMMONWEAL

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Score Words and Score Facts

THE PRESIDENT'S Labor Day speech in Pittsburgh was made in reaction to those who oppose his policies with great sounds and meaningless words. Mr. Truman was right when he attacked those who object to every step which benefits others than themselves with such terms as "collectivism," "statism" and "welfare-statism." There are those who use such tactics to deceive people. They deserve to be attacked because they are vicious. There are people who do the same thing because it is convenient and intellectually easy. They deserve attack for their own sake as well as for the defense of the public.

But the President's reply carried overtones that are not so easily agreed with. An unthinking reaction to propaganda is twice as dangerous as the propaganda itself because it carries conviction and sincerity. The question of "collectivism," "statism" and the "welfare state" cannot completely be dismissed by calling them "scare words." There are such dangers, not because a heavily centralized state might deprive a minority of its profits and privileges, but because it could deprive a majority of its freedom.

One does not realize what a delicate thing our democracy is, how sheer and close are the cliffs on either side, until one sees events like those of this last weekend. In Peekskill—an enlightened and literate community—citizens mobbed and stoned Paul Robeson's supporters. When a community takes mob action it is vividly clear that we are not securely democratic in our beliefs as they affect our actions.

To preserve democracy in spite of those who would scare us; in spite of the selfish, the stupid, the cruel and the ignorant, requires great prudence. The road is narrow and the way is steep, and we are distracted by those who hurl words —as well as stones.

Steel Industry Hearings

ANYONE who has had to serve on the jury in an automobile accident case would see a familiar element of disparity in the recently concluded testimony before the President's "fact-finding" panel. The union and steel company spokesmen cannot even agree as to the actual extent of the fourth round demands: what the union has presented as a thirty-cents an hour increase the industry (including workers not directly engaged in production) estimated at anything from forty to seventy-three cents an hour. The debate lacks even a common starting point.

Wide divergency continues all along the line. Although a previous CIO report had ascribed the recession to declining expenditures for plant and equipment, Mr. Murray and his confrères plead that recessions in general—if not this one—stem from lack of well-distributed purchasing power. (Actual figures do show that in this instance the aggregate of personal incomes has been increasing, while capital expansion has been dropping off.) But one of the main issues in the debate is whether in a time of moderately declining business activity and falling prices the greater stimulus to restore full steam is to raise wages (and prices) or to encourage capital expansion.

Margin of profit is another subject of much dispute, particularly as it involves the complicated question of how much an enterprise needs to lay aside for contingencies and expansion. Some of the union's extreme claims about the profits the steel industry is making today as a result of lower raw material costs were most convincingly controverted. On the other hand the steel industry's plea of declining operations has been discounted by the increase in the percentage of capacity at which it operates and actual production figures.

The pensions demanded by the Steelworkers provoke another controversy. The companies focus their guns on the fabulous cost of setting up a pension plan which is actuarially sound—the United States Steel Corporation claims that it

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would cost them a billion dollars, the market value of all their common and preferred stock. The steel companies further criticize the union proposal to pay benefits out of current contributions as leaving the future unsecured.

All this does not leave the panel of fact-finders with too much solid to go on, although the documentation adds up to hundreds of pages. Some observers predict that the committee's recommendations will be very simple: perhaps a wage increase based on the steel worker's 3 to 4 percent annual increase in productivity, plus a few cents an hour as a company pension contribution.

In the course of stating its case, the union touched upon a number of basic issues. Whatever may be their specific application in the present case, Mr. Murray's points about the long-run effects of well-distributed purchasing power and worker security cannot be denied. Plant expansion unsupported by effective consumer demand leads nowhere.

Parades, Politics and Bonuses

WHEN THE American Legion convened in Philadelphia late this summer, there was less of the old fun-making than ever before but more parading and politics. The parade, reports are, was the biggest yet. But the politics, as the record stands, would hardly warrant superlatives.

The Legion both refused to endorse a change in our present restrictive Displaced Persons law and also refused to oppose a veterans' bonus.

Shortly thereafter, at their convention in Des Moines, the American Veterans of World War II, AMVETS, were less shy about the bonus than the Legion. The AMVETS took the next step and passed a resolution asking that an "adjusted compensation" of as much as $4,500 a man be paid to veterans of World War II.

The astronomical cost to the Federal treasury of a bonus like this makes it, at first thought, very doubtful that Congress would ever pass it into law. However, Congressmen have a habit of treating their veteran constituents and pressure groups with solicitous courtesy: in the recent vote on the Rankin veterans pension, the margin of defeat was one vote, 208 to 207. There are now over four and a half million organized veterans, and when one takes into account their families and sympathy-voters, this is scarcely an electoral bloc to be flaunted.

Since there is a justification, more serious than yearly parading, for veterans organizations and since they have a right to express themselves as a group in pursuit of the political ideals for which they fought, one might expect of them a sense of responsibility commensurate with their past sacrifices. At this time, when our Government is practicing "deficit financing," when it is risking huge sums to make democratic Western Europe a group of solvent nations, and when, it can be safely said, the issue of war or peace hangs so much on the solvency of our treasury, it should be obvious that a veterans' bonus is one thing we cannot afford. The proposal is, of course, surrounded by politics. When these veterans organizations had a chance to act prudently and to pass up the "give me" mentality, they contributed instead to the snow-balling attitude that a benevolent Federal state is what we need to make life secure from the cradle to the grave.

If social welfare in these times can be had only through the agency of a socialized and paternalistic Federal state, then it is going to be increasingly necessary to root out the temptation to sponge off our impersonal "father." Which is to say that the welfare state, by its very nature, will ask of the individual a high measure of personal honesty, sacrifice and sense of the common good. On the bonus issue, the veterans have so far failed to see their responsibility and to give to their countrymen an example and a leadership we cannot long do without.

The Missouri River of Contradictions

ON THE last day of August, the "Regional Committee for a Missouri Valley Authority" sent around a news release about plans and activities in the Missouri River Basin which might be used to formulate some economical questions. These questions revolve around the worth of the Pick-Sloan plan for developing the Missouri country, which is supposed to be in operation, and the wisdom of junking that plan and going on to something else. The release comes from an organization determined to "drive out the Pick-Sloan wasters, and demand a Missouri Valley Authority that can make bona fide decisions in the basin within Congressional policy." The Regional Committee is not impartial, but they present questions which one can ask, perhaps, even without knowing the answers with the partisan certainty of the all-out MVA advocates.

The Department of Agriculture has published a broad program for care and development of the land, water and forest resources of the Missouri Basin, emphasizing improved land utilization and headwater flood control. The focus is on the "little waters" and a multitude of small, cheap dams, and the general effort to hold back water for forest, range and farm uses upstream, and to check the erosion of land and the silting of rivers. The Missouri Basin Interagency Committee approved this Agriculture Program.

But now, is it true that the Department of Interior with the Reclamation Bureau, and the Army Engineers and the active chiefs of the Pick-Sloan operation are fighting the multi-purpose Agriculture proposals? If the answer is no, then the Regional Committee for a Missouri Val-

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ley Authority ought to be publicly exposed and censured for claiming so in a violently and persuasively factual sounding news release. If the answer is yes, then the second question is, why so?

The Pick-Sloan program, which is under way, involves a flowing navigation channel way up the broad, but not very deep and not very regular and not a bit blue, Missouri River. It envisages also a huge development of irrigation in decidedly dry territory along the River's way. Do the water requirements for this combination of river drainage permit a land development upstream which would hold back rain and snow in the way the Department of Agriculture proposes? Is there enough water to supply a Pick-Sloan navigation-irrigation program and also a broad conservation-utilization development? Also, would the Pick-Sloan plan permit large scale hydroelectric generation as economically and efficiently as the Department of Agriculture program? Does the Pick-Sloan plan encourage speedy run-off of precipitation at the expense of the land on which the precipitation falls?

These are all loaded questions, but they still permit intelligible answers on the basis of scientific knowledge. If the knowledge is not accumulated and organized, surely the Pick-Sloan plan should be the one held up in the expenditure of billions of dollars—even hundreds of millions—until the country's taxpayers and the citizens of the Missouri region have enough of the facts clearly before them.

Toll Road Express Highways

IT IS difficult for motorists in the Eastern states to realize that of the million and a half miles of "improved highways" the country over, less than three hundred miles are toll roads. In recent months the subject of building new ones has engaged the attention of a dozen or more state legislatures—with about half of them rejecting toll road proposals and an equal number approving or still considering them.

The debate usually proceeds in rather simple terms. Opponents say that the public already pays taxes for roads without having the burden a second time. Advocates say in rebuttal that present taxes are not anywhere near adequate to construct the new roads that are needed; that to secure the funds for construction, gasoline taxes would have to be increased out of sight. They point to the mounting profits of Turnpike Authorities now in operation, and contend that even in hard times continued expansion of the auto industry makes their success and unfailing payment of interest on their bonds assured.

There are a number of other elements in the problem. Does the high proportion of local traffic on these express highways indicate that toll roads place an excessive burden on local people? Do fees for using toll roads which are open to trucks tend to lessen whatever virtual subsidies operators of these vehicles enjoy because of our free highways? Should there be a charge for using an American public highway? What is the effect of creating more and more semi-public authorities upon the power of the State, the institution of private enterprise, the status of the individual citizen? For such reasons toll road express highway projects open up panoramas on both the physical and political landscape.

The Biggest Poll

THE GOVERNMENT has lined up next year's decennial census of the United States, and the Census Bureau is ready to send 150,000 poll takers into the field. They no longer go simply to count the population in election districts and to keep congressional representation straight. The Census Bureau has already worked a year deciding what questions to ask, but it is doubtful if the top experts in the most inner room of the Bureau could actually tell exactly what good it is going to do to know everything about the population which the census will tell.

For one thing, there will be a footwork check on the mathematical labors of statisticians. The total population ought to turn out about 150,000,000—up almost 19,000,000 from 1940. Pacific Coasters should be 40 percent more numerous than ten years ago. There ought to be more females than males, countrywide. If all this doesn't come out right, then many more American scientists will have to follow the Messrs. Gallup, Roper, and Crossley into the statistical doghouse.

The Census Bureau is planning to challenge the opinion pollsters very directly by sampling the population as well as counting it. Every fifth inquiree will be asked one special lot of questions about education and income and employment and things, and every thirtieth, a particularly personal series about his or her marriages and children and household status. What was the name of that book about the American Male that sold so well? The inhabitant can tell the Census pollsters to go away, but the over-all picture will be developed anyway.

Many of the questions sound as though they had originated in the advertising agencies and departments of big business: about stoves and bathtubs and kitchen sinks and refrigerators, and, most modernly, about television sets. All this will be exposed. The social philosopher is not given many direct questions in the universal examination, but he can pick up an immense material indirectly, and from observation of the questions themselves. The preliminary publicity sounds like a caricature and burlesque of the American way of life.

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The Argentine Picture

An attempt to assay both the virtues and failings of the Peron regime

Charles Henry Lee

NOTHING has served to confuse the political observer of Argentina more than the tendency of both the Peron régime and its Opposition to oversimplify facts and issues. In frankness, if what is now the Opposition had not allowed many economic and social ills to develop and grow, without facing them squarely, and honestly trying to correct them, it is quite probable that the present group would not be in power.

Likewise, in a country where "military caudillos" were not unknown, it was not strange that an army officer, who had both a personal charm and political skill not generally found in men of arms, should have the perspicacity to analyze the facts, evaluate them properly and prepare for his future role in the political life of his country.

Peron's baggage of knowledge consisted in an outstanding military career. He had been an instructor in the War College; had published appraisals of the Russo-Japanese War and the Russo-German Campaigns in World War I; had been a military attaché in Chile. What may have been the most important influence on his future career was the time he spent studying in Italy, where he must necessarily have observed at first hand the actions of a regime that understood mass psychology and based its appeal on a strongly regimented and directed program of social welfare for the underprivileged.

Shortly after the overthrow of the Castillo regime by a military coup June 4, 1942, and before his opponents had a chance to realize what he was doing, Peron secured for himself what were to be the two most important jobs in the country, Under Secretary of War and Secretary of Labor. In the former, under an amenable Secretary he gained control of the Army and saw to it that men who would be friendly to his desires were stationed in key posts. In the latter, he built up his labor support. This post was unimportant and insignificant when he took office, but was decisive from October 12 to 17, 1945, during the days of his Elba from power. It was not the Army that forced his return, because it was not yet aware of the extent of his labor strength. It got on the bandwagon only after it realized that Peron had created a tremendous worker support which could not be ignored.

Another contributing factor to the establishing of the present régime, was the political bankruptcy of his adversaries. The most important and largest single party, the Radicals, have insisted all along, that, "the people are Radicals" (*el pueblo es radical*). This assumption is strangely reminiscent of the Republican argument that seemed very convincing until 1932, that in national elections the American people were Republican. The Opposition, it is believed, had a real opportunity to recover power during the five days of Peron's exile in 1945, in fact could even have secured the Army's support. However, to have capitalized on this opportunity, forceful, dynamic leadership coupled with a timely appropriate program of political action, which could have been immediately executed, was essential. Instead dissension, weakness, and incapacity were demonstrated, and even the ideas of influential civic-minded citizens who could have helped by bringing in new blood were entirely disregarded. This lethargy proved their undoing and gave Peron the time he needed to reorganize his forces and return to his throne. After that it was too late. Whatever can be said of the nature of the subsequent election it is doubtful that full freedom for the Opposition would have produced a different result.

★

YET WITH exception, the best brains in professions, financial and industrial enterprise, art, science, letters, journalism, education, are to be found in the Opposition camp. I believe it is fair to say also that the preponderance of moral and civic integrity is on this side also. Then there are the elements of which the Opposition can be less proud, the political hacks, the selfish interests which feel that they have been displaced and those who are unhappy merely because they are no longer the king makers and have lost their former privileges.

The regime's social welfare program has been expanded further and further with the enthusiastic support of the majority of its beneficiaries. Crusading under the always popular banner of nationalism and opposition to the foreigner, a vigorous program of what is termed national recovery of the country's resources, has also been

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energetically stimulated and developed. Telephones, railways, electric power plants, aviation and steamship lines have been taken over by the Government. This policy has, however, seriously contributed to diminish the country's stock of foreign exchange; the cost of operation, resulting from the social welfare and labor legislation coupled with terrific inflation, has so increased that it represents a serious drain on the treasury.

Who could object to a policy of raising living standards, improving health and sanitation, providing better educational opportunities, establishing and implementing social welfare legislation, protecting working women, children, the aged and infirm? The rub, however, is the means often employed to attain these ends. The totalitarian methods of mass persuasion by radio, motion pictures, press, handbill and every other conceivable vehicle for disseminating information are hardly edifying. It is Government by propaganda.

One of the seediest sides of this regime is the questionable role played by the President's wife. What her past may or may not have been is not the issue. In this, I believe, the Opposition weakens its position enormously by its insistence on dissecting her past life. This serves no useful purpose. Moreover, it plays into her hands, and unhappily many of those who are most violent on this subject are otherwise good Christian women.

★

THE PRESIDENT'S wife and her role in the political picture can only be described as amazing. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a parallel in history. Mrs. Peron was elected to no public post. Nevertheless, she has official offices in two Ministries, that of Labor and that of Public Health. There is no doubt as to who should be seen when problems arise in these and other areas of the Government. You frequently hear of some individual who has enhanced or diminished his political status in direct proportion to his friendship with the First Lady.

When the President and his Ministers make public addresses, Mrs. Peron always is one of the orators. If the President cannot attend, then she is the principal speaker. This is all very strange in a country where women's place has always been the home.

However, by far the most astounding thing in this colorful picture is Mrs. Peron's Foundation —established by Congressional action, graced with her name, endowed with public funds, authorized to receive private contributions. Mrs. Peron has been empowered to run it precisely as she sees fit and without accounting to anyone. The public funds placed at her disposal by this means, and then further increased by substantial private contributions, the procurement of which should be subject to scrutiny, have created a political machine that would have made Boss Tweed drool with envy. Thousands of people are aided and assisted by the Foundation, the poor, the sick and the aged.

To every corner of the Republic, the munificence of Señora Peron is constantly sending forth its packages of good things for the needy—each one stamped with the legend "Peron and Evita." The beneficiaries, like the serfs of old, can only bless their majesties's bounty. All those who are troubled come to Mrs. Peron's audiences and there, like a fairy godmother, she waves her wand and commands the Government to solve their problems.

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MANY of the military, particularly their wives, flinch when they hear of these developments, and on a number of occasions it was rumored that the President would be required to curtail his wife's activities and relegate her to the usual role of a First Lady. So far, this has not materialized, and the open question is: "Is the President afraid of her or does it suit his convenience to have her play the part that she does?" Personally, I am inclined to think that the latter is more probable. Anyway, the military continue to support the regime and this support, coupled with that of the masses, gives the President all that he needs to carry out any policy he chooses.

Needless to say, just as the underprivileged have been favored in every possible way, so too, the Army is kept well-heeled and is allowed to continue to expand. Without a doubt, Argentina today has the best organized, disciplined and equipped army in Latin America.

Argentina came out of the War with a very substantial dollar balance and it is unfortunate that this fund was not spent more judiciously. Prevented during the War from properly maintaining and modernizing her economy's machinery and equipment, it was only natural that she should seek to correct this condition immediately. Unfortunately, this fund was squandered in less than two years without completing the job, and today we see the country faced by a drastic dollar shortage and millions of dollars in unpaid remittances. Blame for this condition is generally laid to graft, inefficiency and the Government Trading Corporation, which was given a virtual monopoly over most exports and imports.

However, it is felt that another factor contributed substantially to this outcome. Miranda, and the others who set the Government's policy, (undoubtedly Army advisers, played a leading role in this result) appear to have concluded that war was really imminent between the West and Russia. Based on this premise, they logically believed that Argentina should expend all her avail-

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able exchange to bring in everything that she required, as expeditiously as possible and regardless of cost. In trying to obtain good machinery and equipment at an accelerated pace from the only available supply source, the United States, Argentina paid high prices for much poor quality merchandise. President Peron was correct when he said some time ago that if his country was without dollars it was because they had all been spent in the United States, and that he had been compelled to pay exorbitant prices for everything. What he did not say was that if purchases had been effected more prudently, through normal trade channels, under less pressure and from regular suppliers, Argentina would have spent fewer dollars and would have obtained more and better things.

The Argentine Government Trading Corporation (IAPI) which was given a monopoly control of exports, has, in a substantial way, contributed to the deterioration of the country's economy and the acceleration of inflation. While recovery was delayed and output remained low in other countries, Argentina enjoyed an enviable trading position. However, two major mistakes were made. Buying countries were antagonized by unduly high-handed bargaining tactics, and it was not realized when the time for making concessions was overdue. Argentina aroused some very strong feelings against herself. Switzerland, for instance, will not forget for a long time the excessive prices she was compelled to pay for grain. What is even more serious is that by failing to see the trend and modify her prices in time, Argentina has lost, perhaps permanently, important markets for her products.

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IT ISN'T easy to effect price adjustments now because internally the inflationary trend that started to move ahead so rapidly in 1945, has received a tremendous impetus from the new social and labor policies that continue to dominate the Government's actions. Then, too, the acquisition by the State of so many public utilities, the enormous public construction program, the gargantuan growth of Government, all these things have only served to intensify the spiral of inflation.

The Opposition will tell you that despite gigantic wage increases the rise in the cost of living, induced by inflation, has entirely offset these benefits and the workers are worse off in terms of real wages. But this is not believed to be the case. It is true that everyone complains about the cost of living, but work is plentiful (in fact, there is a tremendous labor shortage) and the complaints are not vociferous enough to indicate that the gains are exceeded by the losses. Not only that, but the appearance of the worker generally betokens prosperity and well-being. Consumption of goods and services has never been higher. Theaters, movies, restaurants and places of amusement are packed to overflowing.

There is, to be sure, a general feeling that the bubble must soon burst, but nobody knows when, and in the meantime the dance goes merrily on. Rumors of industries that must close down for lack of necessary imports are heard on all sides, but as yet adjustments resulting from this situation have not caused the dire consequences predicted. However, it is undoubtedly true that a country with the basic wealth which Argentina enjoys can stand a great deal of mismanagement without unduly impairing its economy. Argentina should benefit from the failure of world agriculture to keep pace with industrial output, inasmuch as she is one of the few nations that produces substantial surpluses of meat and grains.

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AS LONG as President Peron continues to retain his widespread labor support coupled with the backing of the military, prospects of a political change seem highly unlikely. A drastic economic crisis might change these conditions; however, even then it is wondered whether he would not be able to place the blame for this situation on his enemies, both domestic and foreign. It must be remembered that Argentina is essentially an agricultural country and hence the prospect of starving people has slight chance of arising there. Moreover, with the complete control that the Government exercises over economic life, a lot of paper currency can still be issued to stave off deflation and a major crisis.

The Opposition is very badly handicapped. It lacks vigorous leadership and is badly disorganized. At present its strategy is necessarily limited to criticism. In this it attempts to demonstrate the impropriety of many of the Government's measures. Unfortunately, attacks on measures that benefit the underprivileged can hardly prove popular and only enable the Government to associate the Opposition with forces of reaction and greed. Criticism of measures for violating constitutional rights or principles of good democratic government, is of slight interest to the man in the street, who is more concerned with economics than political rights.

Attacks on the Government's economic policies, which are quite vulnerable, are mostly of interest to the Opposition itself, because the fact is that the average Argentine is better off today than he ever was before. The story of Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, is nowhere more applicable than in the present Argentine setting, where basic principles of good government, democratic rights in regard to freedom of press, speech and assemblage, respect for

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the judiciary, and sound economic tenets have been skillfully castrated until they are no longer vital forces. The Opposition is indeed a voice crying in the wilderness.

What can and will happen in this rich land with a tradition of freedom and independence inherited from those who gave it the status of a nation? No other country in Latin America is so favorably endowed with conditions propitious to the growth and development of true democracy. These factors, it is felt, must eventually prove determining, but it is well nigh impossible to say how or when to look for this result. Will it come through reforms achieved within the ranks of the present party in power? That is not impossible. On the other hand, will the Opposition reorganize itself, develop vigorous leadership by the introduction of new blood into its councils and devise a sound, winning political program that will enable it to attain to power? This seems less likely, unless the political atmosphere were to change unexpectedly as a result of a split in military or labor support or a desperate national economic crisis.

De Senectute

Mr. Maugham awaits the Ferryman

Walter O'Hearn

TIME settles these things, but our guesses along the way may nudge time's judgment. It is fair, then, to speculate on Mr. Somerset Maugham's place in letters and to venture an opinion that his age has known greater artists but surely no better craftsman. That is a commonplace judgment but the years reinforce it. He has been a minor Cellini of the written word and some of his delicately conceived trifles may last as long as the sprawling, abstract, canvasses and hulking marbles of his contemporaries.

Mr. Maugham has two gifts, supremely useful to a writer, which have lasted his time. Even the least of his writing—the tired, re-worked short stories for the slicks, the book-club novels of his last period—acquires distinction from them. The first is a meticulous observation of all the things he wanted to see. (And he is at once eclectic and limited, as blind to spiritual values as a color-blind man is to the spectrum.) The second is a style that is both distinguished and lucid. Read a passage by Mr. Maugham and a passage from the work of almost any contemporary American immediately afterward and the latter's meaning will seem to be obscured behind a scaffolding of mannerism and cliché. Mr. Maugham has needed no such props. His meaning is so evident, so strongly and simply expressed that a mission-trained savage could follow it. Yet I defy any pedant to scowl at it.

The Maughan style is the closest parallel in writing to the conversation of a rather special and vanishing type of Englishman—cultured, direct, immensely worldly, pretentious but curiously unaffected. He is not without mannerisms (From Mr. Maugham a whole generation of writers picked up that word 'engaging' and swirled it around like a child with a sachet) but his is the mannered writing which conceals its own manner.

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LIKE other great craftsmen, Mr. Somerset Maugham has a sound commercial instinct. He has been a note-taker and a spectator since his young manhood and having made full use of his observations in the narrative, the dramatic and the essay form, he now offers us the notes themselves conveniently bound. *Cosmopolitan* magazine, which in the days of Ray Long was the unlikely venue for some small masterpieces of the middle Maugham period, has been publishing a condensation of these notes. With first and second serial rights to Hearst Magazine Inc., and book rights to Doubleday, they will probably bring in a tidy sum.

The earlier notes actually read like leaves from a writer's notebook. It is noteworthy—perhaps significant would be a better word in view of the context—that even here, where Maugham is posting *aides-memoires* to himself and in a sense thinking in shorthand, he manages to be interesting and clear. The writing is terse but not often elliptical. Here is the good craftsman who either from taste, or from a notion that these practice drafts may be saleable, will not cheapen his tools by using them badly.

For many devoted readers the purely notebook phase of Mr. Maugham's collected notes will have a peculiar interest. The delight of armchair scholars in tracking down from jotting to

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finished product Mr. Maugham's reports on Spain and the tropics, on cross colonial couples and old lovers, will not be less than the dilemma of later Maugham readers who try to decide whether Larry in *The Razor's Edge* was based on the young Frenchman who left his family or the British major in the Yoga compound, or both.

To a few of us who have tired of such guessing games and who found *The Razor's Edge* unremarkable—except for the phenomenon of a Briton who could actually hear and reproduce recognizable American speech—the Maugham book will be dull going until the later chapters. Here the notes are expanded into something like an apologia and a valedictory. Let Mr. Maugham persuade the reader that these are notes. If they are, they have been worked over. Here is a man saying a very public goodbye and at the same time justifying himself to his fellows.

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THE present writer is at the disadvantage of having read the condensed magazine version but it is not a serious disadvantage, for such is Mr. Maugham's lucidity and such the limits of his thinking that he does not require long chapters to explain himself. He is a convinced rationalist—convinced but unaggressive and on the whole remarkably incurious—and he has proved to himself that life has no meaning and that physical death is the death of the soul.

Says Mr. Maugham: whatever the soul is, "character is its sensible manifestation." And having seen character changed by circumstance, warped by penury or by physical maladjustment, expanded by prosperity, he finds it impossible to believe "that the soul, thus contingent on the accidents of the body, can exist in separation from it." Without pausing to enquire whether the mutations noted by Mr. Maugham are really organic changes or mere surface contusions, one might pursue this thought. Mr. Maugham would admit, I think, that a philosopher's ideas clear and undefiled, can survive not only his physical existence but can emerge distinct from the pettiness, squalor, penury or mere queasiness which may have touched his life. Maugham will not allow the spirit to survive its own creations.

"When you see the dead" Mr. Maugham notes "it can hardly fail to occur to you that they do look awfully dead." Precisely. And at a point in time before, they were "awfully" alive. Mr. Maugham implies here a subtraction but denies existence to the subtrahend. Or he would have it perform its subtractive function and vanish.

Mr. Maugham set down the observations cited at the age of 70. Five years later he penned some amendments. He had learned more. "Through a chance encounter with an eminent biologist I was led to make myself at least superficially acquainted with the philosophy of organism. It is an instructive and absorbing subject. It liberates the spirit."

But let us not waste time deploring the fact that at this still quite hopeful stage of his senescence Mr. Maugham encountered a biologist rather than a nuclear physicist. His is by admission an old-fashioned mind (he calls himself an "old party") and the large but limited rule of biology is perhaps more suited to his cast of thought. Let us look at the "liberation" to which this late recruitment has brought him. He quotes men of science as agreeing that at some remote period this earth of ours will cease to support even the most elementary forms of human life. Long before this state is reached the human race will have become extinct. "The conclusion can hardly escape one that then all this business of evolution will have been singularly futile and, indeed, that the process that led to the creation of man was a stupendous absurdity on the part of Nature." Such is the end product of rationalism —irrationalism and an overlying mysticism expressing itself in the capitalization of "Nature."

He adds, one dares say wistfully, the thought that "Faith, to those who have it, solves difficulties which reason finds insoluble."

Mr. Maugham is not done. With the determination common to materialists to recognize and claim that upthrust of the human spirit which has no relevance in their systems of thought, he finds comfort in the Book of Ecclesiastes; in Paddy Finnegan of the RAF plunging to his death and sending a message to his squadron "this is it, chaps"; in Captain Oates walking his last lonely mile in the Arctic. This Maugham chooses to describe as "the heroic courage with which man confronts the irrationality of the world" and he adds the observation, "faced with it, God, if he had created man, might hide his head in shame."

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WHAT A QUEER notion of God, hiding His head because His creatures are noble! Maugham, I am convinced, has mistaken this spirit. It is not the Promethean urge which in his time degenerated from the great *non serviams* to lecturers holding out their watches and setting a deadline on Divine Justice. It is not swaggering little Henley captaining his soul: it is rather Lionel Johnson's paraphrase of Invictus "Lonely unto the Love I go, divine to the Divinity." Mr. Maugham going his way without the gift of Faith has asked, with strangely little passion, the superficialities of science to "liberate the spirit."

The curious limitations of Mr. Maugham are indicated by this review of his personal philosophy. What has interested him, and what he has recorded so well, has not been thought, but flesh and artifacts. His preoccupation has been a de-

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tached sensuosity, it seems to me—a contemplation of the sensuous strivings of the past and of his own age, strivings in which he hesitated to join. Some men plunge in these things as into a pool. Others have their breviaries or their laboratories. Mr. Maugham, I think has desired neither the breviary nor the laboratory and not even the pool; he has been content to sit beside the pool and watch. His disciples might argue quite sensibly that he is a novelist and the people in the pool are his business. In that case, he might have troubled to learn a little more about them and the things that really moved them. Even his late investigations of Eastern mysticism seemed to me to be based on the notion that here was a higher and subtler form of sensual development.

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THIS VIEW on his limitations and warped eclecticism has been confirmed by news from a recent visitor to Mr. Maugham's villa. Surrounded with comfort and coolly hospitable, the old author met his guests and showed them about his house. He explained that he had bought it from a Catholic bishop who lived most of the time in Algeria. When he bought it, the building had a frightful cupola and other excrescences. Mr. Maugham had them knocked down to present a plain and pleasantly modern surface.

Inside the house was pleasing but the art, as reported, was a strange mélange of the French and Spanish moderns of Mr. Maugham's middle age, and some very British Royal Academy painting of a theatrical sort. He was getting rid of the Academy stuff and keeping the Renoir, the Rouault, the Pissaro and Utrillo, along with a glass door painted by Gaugin and a Spanish altarpiece.

Mr. Maugham came as a stranger to the house of European culture, which is a very Catholic house, although often desecrated. To make it comfortable for himself he threw away much more than the excrescences. Along with the "cupola and other horrors" he destroyed much of the foundation. The result may have been the "plain, functional piece of architecture" which he desired but it was synthetically modern, as the remade Bishop's house is synthetic modern or as the done-over rotunda of a Victorian hotel. He furnished his house inside with the mingled taste of his victorian background and his acquired sophistication. The result was a pleasant enough place for a rich craftsman to work in and a good house to die in but it was not a house for birth.

In the last sentences of his published notebook Mr. Maughan likens himself to "a passenger waiting for his ship at a wartime port". One hesitates to quote at length from a writer who was always vigilant at protecting his copyright, but the passage is moving because it is unemotional; its pathos stems from the lack of self-pity.

He writes: "I am ready to embark at a moment's notice. I leave the sights of the city unvisited. I do not want to see the fine new speedway along which I shall never drive, nor the grand new theatre, with all its modern appliances, in which I shall never sit. I read the papers and flip the pages of a magazine, but when someone offers to lend me a book I refuse it, because I may not have time to finish it, and in any case, with this journey before me, I am not of a mind to interest myself in it.

"I strike up acquaintances at the bar or the card table, but I do not try to make friends with people from whom I shall so soon be parted. I am on the wing."

When Mr. Maugham wrote those lines he was probably sunning himself very comfortably over a writing block and—in spite of repeated disclaimers—considering a new offer from his publishers. But let conjecture stand. The words will serve very well as a model for tired hedonists saying farewell. A man leaving a city for the last time begins to leave it long before he embarks.

It is at the embarkation point that Mr. Maugham and his school break down. For even a traveler in wartime leaves one place in the hope of getting to another place. By his own definition Mr. Maugham is going nowhere. Between one point of time and the next the traveller plunges from the dark gangway and is lost, and if that is all of life it might be better lived fully unto the end. Between one instant and the next all the wit, the sensibility, the painstaking scrutiny that were Somerset Maugham simply cease to exist. In a universe where nothing else is wasted, they are deader than last night's moth.

Some of us will not have it so. We would even wish Mr. Maugham in his wartime journey a good convoy and a safe passage.

Los Angeles Drives for an FEPC

HARRY W. FLANNERY

CALIFORNIA is now believed actually moving toward setting up a Fair Employment Practices Commission.

In the past, even when the goal was very close, Communist band wagon jumpers have succeeded in stopping the movement. In some cases, confusion was effected by introducing varied new entries. In a recent legislative session, some of Governor Earl Warren's committee chairmen and key men failed to line up needed strength.

This time, the tactic is different. The object is to enact an FEPC in California's largest city,

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Los Angeles, with the method of passage and the operation of the Commission planned as a model for the State.

To this end, Los Angeles citizens have set up the Council for Equality in Employment, which is barred to Communists and fellow travelers. At the same time, an educational campaign will seek to sell the people on the wisdom of the FEPC. Radio and other mediums will be used. Efforts are being made to arouse such a widespread demand that the members of the Los Angeles City Council will realize their constituents definitely want to eliminate discrimination in employment on account of race, creed, color and national origin.

The Council was formed on January 26, but it has just arrived at the point of beginning its public campaign. In the meantime, two legal labor authorities, Robert W. Gilbert and his associate, Lou Nissam, studied the FEPC laws of New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Chicago and Phoenix. They then drew up a proposed ordinance, which was presented by Councilmen Don A. Allen, G. Vernon Bennett, Ernest E. Debs, Kenneth Hahn, Harold A. Harby, George H. Moore and Edward Roybal, seven of the total number of 15 councilmen. The proposal was referred to two committees, Personnel, and Public Health and Welfare, for study and report.

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IN INTRODUCING the proposed Los Angeles Equal Employment Opportunity ordinance, the Councilmen said in the opening paragraphs of their statement:

> "The evils and injustices arising from discrimination in employment . . . form a fertile breeding ground within our City for Communistic influences and philosophy. We are painfully aware of former experiences in this City and State where such totalitarian elements have hypocritically advanced extreme and unworkable proposals for legislation against job discrimination with no other real purpose than to raise funds and win converts to their unwholesome objectives.
>
> "It is the very fact that these foes of civic unity have frequently succeeded in exploiting the miserable results of job discrimination, without any real intention of helping to solve the basic problems, which make it essential that the constructive forces of our community take some positive steps to combat the economic consequences of intolerance.
>
> "To fail to take constructive action now will give further credence to the belief that racial and religious discrimination is too thoroughly established in our economy to be outlawed. We will inculcate hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens with the disillusion, cynicism and hopelessness which are fertile fields for alien ideologies and false Messiahs at home and abroad. We will find ourselves up against the impossible task of trying to balance the books of social injustice with other than red ink."

Many Californians, who had bought Lincoln bonds and otherwise contributed to what they had been told was a movement to enact a state FEPC, knew finally by experience that they had contributed to the war chests of discontent instead of the efforts of those who sincerely wanted the situation corrected.

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AMONG THE original sponsors are representatives of the CIO and AFL, of independent unions, organizations like the Catholic Labor Institute, religious leaders, women's groups, political clubs, fraternal organizations; and it is hoped to include a committee representing businessmen and manufacturers.

The current task is to set up staff coordinators in each councilmanic district to work with citizens' committees. Individuals and groups within each district will be urged to tell their councilman of their support of the proposed ordinance. At a recent meeting, Councilman Roybal reported that his calls had so far been only from those in opposition. Even though Communists and their supporters are kept out, it was stressed that reactionary elements will be active and powerful.

That session demonstrated that groups of the extreme left will continue to try to get on the bandwagon. One spokesman, with the contention that no group can set itself up as a judge of others, warned that unless the bars are let down, an opposition ordinance will be introduced. Several such, some weaker and others stronger with the end of division and destruction, are expected.

A further tactic has just been disclosed. An organization with a similar name has been formed, the "Fair Employment Practices Committee." The Council for Equality in Employment charges that this committee, formed by the California Legislative Conference, is "putting out petitions, which is just another way of getting a lot of names and addresses, to make a new 'sucker list' for the Communist Party, the Communist People's Daily World and for Communist Party and Communist front organizations. But the greatest danger is that this fine movement for civic betterment might be wrecked if the issue is allowed to become confused and if it actually appeared that the Communist-dominated California Legislative Conference was the motivating force behind the ordinance now being considered in the city council."

The LA Council is no longer color blind. Its members are concentrating on the carefully drawn ordinance, they are keeping their eyes alert for hitch hikers, and they do not intend to be halted by a flaring red signal in this drive to give Los Angeles now and California later, equal employment opportunity.

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Communications

Voluntary Hospital Plans

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors:

As one of the advocates of the national health insurance bill I must agree with you that "the August 17th report of the Health Insurance Council" came "as a decided shock." Not, however, for the reasons suggested in your editorial.

To the best of my knowledge and based on factual materials presented in recent hearings to the Subcommittee on Health of the United States Senate, it is true that some sixty million insurance policies involving health may be in effect in this country today. But not more than four million out of the one hundred forty-seven million people in the nation have health insurance coverage which can be called comprehensive. I was deeply shocked by the misleading implications in the report of the Council. As just a little bit of investigation would have shown your editorial writer, that sixty million figure includes a great number of duplications. For instance, if you had a Blue Cross contract for hospital insurance, a medical society contract for surgical insurance and an insurance company contract to pay you $25 a week while ill, the Council's report as interpreted by your editorial writer would imply that three American citizens were covered by voluntary health insurance. The fact would be that only one person—not three—had health insurance and that one person still did not have comprehensive insurance even though he was paying far more than the average family in this country can afford.

Moreover, it implies that people carrying a policy which indemnifies them in part for the expense incident to a limited number of ailments have adequate insurance protection. This is very far from the truth. Even the Blue Cross plans for hospital insurance, which I regard very highly, cover no more than some 25 to 30 percent of the average families' medical care expenditures. Very, very few of the medical society sponsored plans give anything like adequate protection and none of them, to my knowledge, provides for coverage of that preventive medicine which, by keeping people well instead of merely treating them when they are seriously ill, would not only be far better for our people but would greatly lower the costs of medical care.

Please do not misunderstand me. I would be thoroughly in favor of voluntary health insurance plans if they could do the job. Some ten years of study and investigation of this problem have convinced me, however, that the only way in which all of the American people can be assured of adequate health care, on a self-respecting basis, and at a price that they can all afford, is through a national system of health insurance. Only through such a program can unnecessary overhead, waste, and duplication be avoided and only through such a program can all of our people be given the benefits of health insurance.

I would also have your editorial writer understand that my bill for national health insurance calls for completely decentralized, local control of operations. It would not change the practice of medicine but only the way in which we pay for medical care. Moreover, it would aid rather than hinder the development of those sound voluntary plans which actually give consumers better health care for their money by using their pooled funds to promote a better organization of health services.

In closing, I should like to suggest to your editorial writer that in dealing with matters which literally mean life and death to millions of people, he avoid use of such emotion-arousing terms as "socialized medicine" and stick to the facts. In this instance, the fact is that *I am for national health insurance because I am opposed to socialized medicine.* Already we have over twenty million people eligible for one form or another free, tax paid medical care and there are constant pressures on the Congress to extend that number. If we are to prevent the gradual extension of such free, tax paid care given through doctors employed by the State, it is essential that we develop a program of national health insurance managed by the recipients rather than by the purveyors of medical care, and paid for by the recipients in accordance with each family's income.

HON. JAMES E. MURRAY,
U. S. Senator, Montana.

Anglo-US-Canadian Parley

Albany, Calif.

TO the Editors:

Your note in the issue of September 2nd on the Anglo-U.S.-Canadian Parley is in the main very much to the point, but I am puzzled by two passages in it. You recommend for Britain, as one of the things she must undertake to get out of her difficulties, "purchases of low cost foreign food to supplant much inefficient domestic agricultural production." This is strange advice to tender to a country whose chief problem is its balance of payments and one that has quite properly increased its home agricultural production in order to save foreign exchange —particularly dollars. Further, to speak of "much inefficient agricultural production" in regard to Britain is even today a bold thing to do. It is true that the British farmer has at the moment a virtually guaranteed market and that cases of inefficiency are sometimes to be found, but even now, if high output per acre combined with high output per head is the test, there are only two or possibly three countries that can show even a slightly better record. Whatever may be said of British industry—and I have myself just said plenty in your columns—British agricultural efficiency leaves little to be desired.

I am also non-plussed by your question whether, as a further contribution towards British recovery apparently, Britain intends to "reduce and refinance debts to such countries as India, Egypt and Argentina." You seem to imply that the liquidation of these debts, contracted during the war, will of itself assist that recovery, but this is putting the cart before the horse. Recovery would in due course enable Britain to scale down the debts. Premature attempts to settle the debts however would retard rather than expedite recovery.

J. L. BENVENISTI.

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The Labor Movement

Taking Issue with Mr. Benvenisti

IN THE August 26 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, J. L. Benvenisti has contributed another of his scholarly analyses of the British economy, entitled "The British Crisis". I hope that Mr. Benvenisti will forgive me however, if I take issue with him in a friendly way.

I have no intention of quarreling with his analysis of the crisis and its causes. But the short part at the end, which is concerned with "what can be done to get us out of the general mess?" raised several small hackles on the back of my neck.

These hackles rose because the solution that Mr. Benvenisti suggested for Britain is the same solution that many intelligent, liberal-minded people—including Catholics—suggest for any economic difficulty that has arisen, is arising, and will arise in our own country. It is a solution that profoundly affects the labor movement and until it is either accepted or rejected no real progress can be made, by Catholics or anyone else, towards curing the cancer that is eating at our American economy. At least that is the opinion in this corner.

The solution is briefly this. It starts from an assumption which is essential to it and from which it logically proceeds. That assumption is that employers, or management, or "the capitalists" are too selfish, weak or lazy to do their duty. Therefore we must bow to this fact, unpleasant and inconvenient and even inexcusable as it may be, and we must look to the workers for all the sacrifices that are necessary to correct whatever maladjustment has developed in the economy.

Mr. Benvenisti puts it this way: "vigorous speculative activity flourishes when abundant natural resources provide the basis for abundant rewards. As the chances of such returns decline, entrepreneurs tend to huddle together and play for safety . . ." By "speculative activity" Mr. Benvenisti means mainly the willingness to risk capital on "new technical improvements" which he has shown very convincingly that British production needs.

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HE dismisses the possibility of doing anything about this situation. There remains labor, and "the outlook is at first sight equally depressing." Too many workers believe that higher wages and shorter hours "are in all circumstances absolutely good." But there is a ray of hope, "the British have an extraordinary capacity for responding to leadership . . . It is just possible that the elements of our problem may quite suddenly become intensely vivid in people's minds and the notion of every pair of hands producing a maximum of value over the maximum period of time at the minimum of cost may suddenly sweep the nation, yes even if it means abandoning cherished trade union privileges."

The implications here should be clear. We have the capitalist and we also have the workingman. The capitalist has money which is needed for machines which in turn are essential to national recovery. But the financial returns to be gained from spending the money are not sufficiently great or sufficiently certain to persuade him to do so. Therefore we must look to the workingman.

The workingman has only his labor to contribute. What is wanted is that he should contribute more labor for longer hours at less pay, even though his present pay is admittedly inadequate for minimum requirements. This is a large order indeed. But it might work, says Mr. Benvenisti, if only the proper "leadership" can be found to make "intensely vivid" in this man's mind the necessity for making the sacrifice.

Of course, the case of America is not exactly the same. America still has abundant natural resources and the possibility of "abundant rewards" for the capitalist. Nevertheless we run up against the same argument every day with a slightly different twist. It goes like this: "I admit that American businessmen ought to pay better wages, charge lower prices, and be satisfied with a more reasonable profit, but the trouble is that we've got to have investment, we've got to have capital, and if the rewards for capital aren't sufficiently fat, then nobody will invest . . . so what can you do?"

Or it goes like this, "sure the government ought to tax excess profits, *but*—" and then into the refrain.

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THE solution suggested by Mr. Benvenisti seems unthinkable as long as we have a political democracy. Workers, fortunately, are in the majority and sooner or later they are going to insist that the government do something about equalizing the sacrifice. A given situation may require sacrifice on their part. There is no quarrel on that score, absolutely none. And in times of national emergency, both in England and America, the workers have shown that they are willing to make a sacrifice for the common good.

But it is simply not in human nature to expect a man to sacrifice when he sees that others far more able to sacrifice than he are not being required to do so to an equal extent.

The objection to Mr. Benvenisti's solution however, goes deeper than that. The assumption it is based upon does not seem to be consistent with the facts. That assumption as we have shown, is that the capitalists are hopelessly selfish and nothing can be done to alter that selfishness.

Here we come to a curious thing. Mr. Benvenisti's solution is certainly more in line with Conservative theory than with labor theory. And yet it springs from an apparent belief that it is possible to appeal successfully to the intelligence and idealism of the workers, but it is hopeless to appeal to the intelligence and idealism of the capitalists.

It is a duty therefore for me to spring to the defense of the capitalist class and to point out that, on the contrary, it is not hopelessly lost. There are good men among its ranks. True these men are still few in number. In this country they do not appear to be organized or to speak with any show of unity or authority. And to our shame the Catholic capitalists are of little

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help. But still it is our hope and our prayer that "leadership" will arise and that the elements of our problem may quite suddenly become intensely vivid in the peoples' minds and the notion of every capitalist contributing the maximum of value over the maximum period of time at the minimum of profit may suddenly sweep the nation, yes, even if it means abandoning cherished capitalist privileges.

Actually the situation in America does not call for such heroic sacrifice on the part of our capitalists. But it does call for a more general awareness on their part that *all* classes of society must contribute—in justice and charity—to the healing of the wounds that tear us asunder.

The Popes have told us again and again that unless this hope, that is, the reform of the capitalist class, is realized, there can be no lasting solution to the economic problem. The most eloquent and authoritative statement of the Catholic position on this point is contained in the encyclical of Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*. It could be of tremendous value if more of us could agree that there truly is the answer to Mr. Benvenisti's question, "what can be done to get us out of the general mess?"

R.I.P.

ON THURSDAY, September 1st, the 48-hour week officially died in its last great stronghold in America, the railroad industry. On that day 1,000,000 non-operating workers went on the 40-hour shift and started getting two days a week off instead of one. It was undoubtedly a big day for them and for their families. And for 40 hours they received what they had previously received for 48, plus a seven-cent raise. May they enjoy their good fortune all the more for having waited so long.

The central tower of the stronghold, where the operating employees are being held, still fights on. But it can only be a question of time before they too are liberated. They represent about 20% of the working force.

If America ever reaches the desperate state of Great Britain, then perhaps it will be necessary for industrial labor to go back to 48 hours, but that time is surely not now.

JOHN C. CORT.

Of Note

Catholics in Scandinavia

THE ANNUAL bulletin of St. Ansgar's Scandinavian Catholic League of New York (Mrs. Walter J. Root, Corresponding Secretary, 114-19 201st St., St. Albans 12, N. Y.) reports gradual progress in that area, in which "for nearly 300 years no Mass was said." Very Rev. George E. Ryan, Rector of St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Paul, Minn., in telling of a recent visit, says that "among the people of Norway and Sweden one would meet a thousand non-Catholics before he would meet a Catholic." He continues:

A brief survey reveals that in these countries the Church is essentially urban. The churches that have been erected have, in large part, been built with material assistance from outside countries. The meager handful of Catholics could not have built nor maintained the existing institutions without the help that came from the Catholic peoples of Europe. These sources of aid have largely ceased in these times. Even were it possible to erect churches in towns and villages where there might be a nucleus of Catholics the problem of providing clergy for those churches would be insurmountable. There are 48 priests in all of Norway, 42 in Sweden and 104 in Denmark.

When Catholic families move from the cities to remote places, practically all contact with the Church is discontinued. The prohibitive cost of travel to distant towns and villages is beyond the slender means of the clergy, even if they could leave their parishes.

The Church in Brazil

AT AN INTERVIEW before the opening of the first Rural Life Institute for students in major seminaries to be held in our Eastern states, Msgr. Luigi Ligutti, Executive Secretary of the National Rural Life Conference, spoke of conditions he had encountered this summer. He had been in Brazil giving lectures on rural sociology, health and agronomy to 40 young priests gathered from 16 of Brazil's 21 states. According to Margaret A. Vance in the Newark *Evening News*:

> He stated that there are "enough social evils" to have Communism get started, but Communism "apparently is not making headway in Brazil. They want the Catholic Church and that is the size of it," he contended.
>
> However, the monsignor painted no glowing picture of religious conditions in that country. In the whole of Brazil there are only 6,000 priests, half of whom are natives, for 40 million Catholics. Land is either divided into such small parcels that it is overworked by the owners or in very large farms worked by migrant labor, he said.
>
> In the area where there are small farms there is much soil erosion and the land has a low nutritional value, he pointed out. It is impossible for the farmer to sell any of his products because he grows only enough for his family to eat. Disease, because of malnutrition, is prevalent. "Where you have soil that is hungry, you have a people that is hungry," Msgr. Ligutti explained.
>
> "The condition of religion in those places is terrible. There is hardly any mass attendance. The people don't have the strength to walk to church. One priest will minister to 20,000 to 30,000 people."

The Trappist Life

IN TELLING of the purchase of the Luce plantation in Berkeley County, South Carolina, for the eighth Trappist monastery in the United States, The *Bulletin*

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of the Catholic Laymen's Association of Georgia (Augusta, Georgia) describes that Order's way of life:

> Since the Trappists maintain themselves by their own labor, many of them are experts in scientific agriculture and devote years of patient study and work to the development of superior strains of vegetables, grain and cattle. Their farms are always models of scientific farming and, though they observe the rule of their religious life which goes back to the founding of their Order at La Trappe, France, two hundred years ago, and beyond that to the great Abbey of Citeaux nine hundred years ago, and even beyond that to Monte Cassino, where St. Benedict drafted his rule of monastic life, they use all the modern farm equipment that can be secured to further their husbandry.
>
> The Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance is the most austere of all the religious Orders of the Church. Its members may enter only by application, and must stand the most searching investigation. On entering the monastery they are placed on probation for two years. If they are willing to accept the rigid burden imposed by the rules of the Order—the fasting, the prayer, the silence, the withdrawal from things on earth, the long hours of meditation and gruelling physical labor, they become admitted to the Order, and if qualified may be ordained as priests. Those who lack the basic education to become priests, or who prefer the status of lay brothers, may take that place in the monastic life.

Worker-Owned Factory

THE AUGUST 31 *Labor Leader* (226 Lafayette St., New York 12, N. Y.) tells of a rivet-making enterprise in Gananoque, Ontario, which was purchased by its employees three years ago.

What has happened since the spring of 1946? Absenteeism has almost disappeared and labor turnover is less than one per cent. Although some twenty people have left, production has gone up fourteen per cent. Hours of work have dropped from forty-four to forty. Many improvements in working conditions have been effected. There are holidays with pay. There is free hospitalization for the worker and his family sponsored by the company and also a sick benefit fund.

Any person leaving the company must allow the repurchase of his shares at par. At present many employees are redeeming the debentures and buying new stock. With fair prosperity the debentures should be fully redeemed ahead of time.

The policies of the company are decided by a voting trust but all major matters are presented to the stockholders and reasons given for such decisions.

The morale of the new owner-workers has given better quality to the product, deeper interest in the maintenance of machinery, and far less waste of time and material.

Somebody has remarked, "Here the men whistle at their work, not at the women on the street outside."

The Screen

Degrees of Violence

IN SEVERAL of our new films crime and violence are carried to extremes in vividness of portrayal. The pictures try desperately to justify their scenes of realistic brutality; but we can't help wondering if the raw sequences of sadism are not thrown in more for their shock value than for any real understanding of the characters involved. In *"White Heat"* James Cagney gives a superb performance of a gang leader who is ruthless in his methods. It matters not to him whom he hurts, or indeed even kills, in his rise to the top—a top that is almost meaningless, except for its piles of money. This film might well have been called "Death of a Gangster" for it tells of the last months in the life of Cody Jarrett, a homicidal paranoiac who coolly steps over the bodies of his victims and equally coolly gives himself up to the law for a small-time robbery to establish an alibi for his big $300,000 job. The script, which has been turned into exciting cinema by Director Raoul Walsh, explains Cody's behavior with emphasis on his mother fixation. We know why Cody, whose mother (Margaret Wycherly) kept reminding him that someday he'd be on top of the world, had such grand ideas of himself and why he had such terrible headaches, which were fancied at first and later became real, but we don't care for him or his henchmen; and as the film goes on and on with scenes of violent exploits, our only interest is in how the law will wipe out this psychopathic leader and his gang.

Fortunately the law in "White Heat" are also well portrayed, particularly by John Archer as one of the chief T-men and Edmond O'Brien as an undercover man who lives with criminals in prison and gets the inside dope. Also in the cast, which includes various cops-and-robbers types, are Virginia Mayo as Cody's wife, and Steve Cochran as one of the gang who hopes to succeed the boss. In spite of the film's tremendous suspense and its efforts to make us understand Cody, you may find yourself curiously apathetic about the whole thing—even when Cody, on top of the world at last, high up in a gas tower, perishes in flames. By that time even violence doesn't disturb you.

★

"THIEVES' HIGHWAY" uses its own realism as a justification for its many scenes of brutality. The script, which A. I. Bezzerides wrote from his novel "Thieves' Market," is concerned with the trucking business in California, with hard-working truck drivers, with the competition they meet, with the woe they have to face once they reach the market and start battling with produce merchants. Jules Dassin, who directed "The Naked City," directs this story with the same forceful realism. The photography is beautiful and clear; and the acting is a good example of the tough school. Richard Conte, Jack Oakie, Millard Mitchell and Joseph Pevney portray truck drivers who are as handy with their fists as they are skillful on the road. But theirs is not a

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happy experience; and Lee J. Cobb, as the tricky, unscrupulous merchant, proves the cause of many of their troubles. Valentina Cortesa, as a tramp who has a heart of gold, and Barbara Lawrence, as Conte's fiancée who loses interest when he loses his money, are the two women involved in Conte's exciting trip to San Francisco. Technically "Thieves' Highway" is first-rate cinema; but the violence it depicts so vividly and its doubtful moral standards detract from its effectiveness as satisfying entertainment.

★

DIRECTOR Alfred Hitchcock, master of suspense and understated violence, now presents one of his lesser items. *"Under Capricorn"* has its moments of breath-taking thrills and scares, but most of the picture is a long, rambling and rather talky historical melodrama. When the story, which stems from the novel by Helen Simpson, sticks to the incidents concerning Lady Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman portraying an alcoholic) and her husband (Joseph Cotten as an "emancipist", a one-time British prisoner who has served his term in 1831 Australia, but must watch his step about getting into trouble) and a young Irishman who has come to Australia to make his fortune (Michael Wilding with plenty of authentic Irish charm) the movie successfully holds your interest. In fact its main theme, in which young Wilding attempts some pre-Freudian cures on the beautiful lady who turned to drink to escape from a guilty conscience, is handled in a fascinating manner. Hitchcock knows how to make us tingle with expectation and how to frighten us with a sudden horror. But in "Under Capricorn," this director who understands the cinema medium so well, allowed his technique to be overshadowed by fancy-dress trimmings, by Technicolor and by a script that often wanders too aimlessly. "Under Capricorn" won't exactly bore you, but you'll wish it had been better.

★

THEN again, *"Reign of Terror"* errs in the other direction. It has so many thrills, chases, horrors and accumulations of suspense that one can hardly stand all the goings-on, and the piece loses a sense of reality. Walter Wanger has given this post-French Revolution movie an excellent production and a good cast, with Robert Cummings and Richard Hart lined up on the liberal side, and Richard Basehart (as Robespierre), Arnold Moss and Jess Barker aiming at the Robespierre dictatorship. All this results in intrigue, spying, counter-spying and several duels. There's something of a romance too between Arlene Dahl and Cummings, but you'll probably be too exhausted to enjoy it. However, movie-goers who want to wear off some extra energy by helping all these violent Frenchmen establish a government to their liking will have a rip-roaring time in "Reign of Terror."

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Books

The Strange Life of August Strindberg. Elizabeth Sprigge. Macmillan. $3.50.

WHEN August Strindberg died in 1912, he was considered one of the greatest poets of his time and a playwright of genius. His fame was still growing during the First World War and in the early twenties, but later was fading rather rapidly. Today, as we are celebrating the centenary of Strindberg's birth, the poet no longer represents a vital force of living literature but has already entered Literary History's museum of curiosities.

That Strindberg was born only one century after Goethe illuminates the frenzied tempo into which the harmonious world of classicism had decomposed, subjectivism had laid hold of European intelligentsia and thrown it into the abyss of nihilism. Strindberg was certainly a psychopath; his ugly blasphemies, his crabbed hatred of women, his obstinate idées fixes, his confused chemical and medical theories would be of no interest, had they not been tragically mingled with the wishful dreams of a pure child and a genuine artistic power. His unhappy life is only interesting as a commentary to his poetic work.

Elizabeth Sprigge, a very versatile English author, has a good knowledge of the Swedish language, and the quality of her book lies in the ample use of Strindberg's letters and other Swedish sources. She tries to use her highly emotional and contradictory material (biographies by his first and second wives, apologies of Strindberg and pamphlets against him) in a fair and unbiased way. Unfortunately, she has only a vague admiration for the poet and seems to have no very precise ideas about his specific poetic qualities and limitations. Her book is more useful as an analysis of the human being Strindberg than as an appreciation of his writing.

Miss Sprigge hints at the contrast between the blasphemy of Strindberg's early work and the religious longing of his more mature period. Some of his contemporaries were even accusing him of religious mania, but Strindberg's attitude is typical for a period which experienced anew the reality of the supranatural but lacked the humility to return home to religion. This explains Strindberg's turning to theosophy and occultism. He cried to God from the depth, confessed that the Cross is the only hope of mankind, even bought a rosary to ward off evil spirits, but he remained convinced of his own righteousness and thought that the clamoring for mercy of the Gospel was mere cowardice. Not only his religious desire but even his poetical inspiration was stimulated by the churches and cathedrals of France and the monasteries and little chapels of Austria; returned to the Protestant north he felt as in barbarian captivity. What conclusions did he draw from this nostalgia? He had himself made by his tailor a decorative cloak of monkish cut and color—but he did not take a serious step toward entering the Catholic Church.

His suffering and longing were sincere, but at the same time he was also a charlatan and this gives Strindberg, the man and the poet, his ambiguous face.

MAX FISCHER.

A Rage to Live. John O'Hara. Random House. $3.75.

JOHN O'HARA is rare among those American novelists who either have elected or have found it unsafe to venture beyond the naturalistic perspective. Most of them sag with the dead weight of the Document or put on an unconvincing show of confidence with a nervous staccato of trivialities. I mean that most of them I can't read at all, and O'Hara, when he is good, I can't stop reading. He knows how to catch the details—in *Butterfield 8* and *Appointment in Samarra* his ear for speech is almost uncanny—but more than that, he knows how to put the details together in juxtapositions that suggest the irony of the simultaneous or the catastrophe of time. He knows all our susceptibilities to the gross sensations of mass-scale living, and his style—like that of a hundred lesser practitioners—suggests that omniscient purveyor of bulletins between the "outside world" and our jitters, the Reporter.

The limitations of this perspective, in which the brute fact is a kind of eight-ball, do not suggest themselves if you stay with the right material—the violent is always the best for this sort of thing—and if you end your book quickly enough. You are depending entirely on tricks, and no one of them ought to be used more than once or you're ruined. But *A Rage to Live* goes on for 590 pages, and it's rather hard for Mr. O'Hara to keep moving fast enough without having some of his equipment unravelling out of his sleeve. This new novel covers the full lifetime of one woman and all the layers of life in a Pennsylvania town, and in more than one place the narrow journalistic confines of the subject would appear to crack.

★

THE point is that we don't really believe in the painfully stylized world of O'Hara or Chandler or, for that matter, Hemingway. We're delighted to spend a short time in it and pretend that life is as crisp as they make it. But when they begin claiming for themselves the full human dimension we ask for more air and light —and subtlety. It is a writer like James, carelessly thought of as "artificial," who alone can render the world with this *largesse,* this true style which is not trickery but "the morality of the intellect." If the novel is to be nothing more than a *document brut,* I don't know why I should dally with the inexactitudes of literature when I can read the footnotes in Freud or the authors of *Middletown.* And when a novelist chooses just this kind of document as his sole method of revealing character, a fully detailed record of all the sexual explorations of one Grace Caldwell, there is an offense which I do not find in scientific case-histories. The offense is sentimentality. The significance implied for the relation of romantic love to the meaning of life is the same, essentially, whether the scene is a rose-bower in a 19th century garden or a bedroom in a 20th century

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hotel. One passage might be a little more lavender than the other, but both are purple; and for their complete effect they require a little more *naïveté* and credulity than a literate adult can command. Character is a complex business, if Mr. O'Hara wants to go in for it full-length and in its full relation to a society. He will have to tell us not only what people do in their rage to live but why they do it and, beyond what the statistician might observe for himself, what they are really doing.

HENRY RAGO.

Ferment in the Far East. Mary A. Nourse. Bobbs-Merrill. $3.75.

CAVEAT LECTOR! Here is a book of which the reader should truly beware. And through no fault of the author, other than a stomach smaller than her eyes. In brief, in *Ferment in the Far East,* Mary Nourse has attempted too much. She started with an admirable idea: to relate the histories of the countries of the Far East; to show how each has had its effect upon the others; and finally, to show the present-day problems posed by the cumulative effect. But instead, she has led herself into an unfortunate circle. To make her book attractive to readers other than students of the Far East she has limited its length. And limitation of space has led her inevitably to generalization and condensation. And the only persons fitted to fill in the blank spaces—and thus gain a relatively true picture—are the very students for whom the book is not intended.

This is not to say, in any respect, that the author is not well qualified. Mary Nourse knows the Orient as do few other American women. Thus, the only sin she commits in this book is one of omission. If the average reader can remember, and appreciate, the fact that neither this history nor this interpretation is complete, he will be perfectly safe. And with this reservation, *Ferment in the Far East* is well worth recommending. It presents a relatively new approach to Oriental history; one which should be much further exploited. One cannot help but wish that the author had allowed herself a little greater expression of personal opinion, especially in relation to the present-day situation. But the relative lack of that is in keeping with the rest of the book, so too much complaint is unwarranted.

There are certainly better histories of the Far East. And there are also better interpretations of that history. But they are all designed for the serious student. With this book, Mary Nourse has filled a real gap by providing a study of Far Eastern history suited to the tastes of the average reader. So long as he remembers that much has been left unsaid, he will find the much that has been said of real value.

JAMES O. FREDERICK.

The Passionate Tennis Player and Other Stories. Charles Tekeyan. Pastoral-Universe. $2.50.

AT REGULAR ten year intervals it seems, an Armenian short story writer springs up to rescue the English language from sobriety, dullness and accuracy. In the twenties it was Michael Arlen, in the thirties, William Saroyan, and the latest contender for the vacated

A FINE EARLY HARVEST

of new books is coming from Sheed & Ward this fall. Five are already published: **DANTE THE PHILOSOPHER** by **Etienne Gilson.** M. Gilson begins by doing an amazing demolition job on that theory about Beatrice being just a symbol, not a real girl, but the meat of the book is an examination of Dante's philosphy in the *Convivio,* the *De Monarchia* and the *Divina Commedia.* ($4)

THREE MYSTICS: St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa and El Greco. Edited by **Father Bruno de J.M., O.D.C.** There are 100 illustrations in the book: mostly reproductions of paintings by El Greco. The idea is to show how marvelously they fit and interpret the writings of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. Father Bruno, editor and part author of the book, is the greatest living authority on mysticism. Another contributor is René Huyghe, Conservator in Chief of the paintings in the Louvre: you get the idea (a new one): a study by experts in both fields of the relation between art and mysticism. ($7.50)

MIND THE BABY! by **Mary Perkins.** The author calls this: "A mother's various attempts, in the course of the day's routine, to appreciate by observation, reason and faith the wonders of God's making and remaking of one small Christian. These attempts set forth in the hope of working with God's help towards a less harassed, a more intelligent and loving service of Christ in these His least brethren, our fascinating and exasperating children." ($2)

THE LAWS OF HOLY MASS: an English translation of the rubrics of the Roman Missal: useful to a number of people, we hope. ($2)

THE CREED IN SLOW MOTION by **Msgr. Ronald Knox,** on the Apostles' Creed, matches last fall's wonderful **MASS IN SLOW MOTION** ($2.50, each book): opinions differ as to whether it's better than the first book; no one so far thinks it less good. What an astonishing man Msgr. Knox is: far from being flattened by his long struggle with the Bible, he seems to have settled down to produce a book a season. The Spring Knox was **TRIALS OF A TRANSLATOR** ($2) which *he* says he thinks of more lasting value than his translations themselves. H'mm. It's a good book, anyway. Meantime, the pride of our lives is the Knox Missal—not quite ready, alas, but definitely to appear on October 15th. Its official title is **THE LATIN-ENGLISH MISSAL,** and if we may say so without irreverence, it's a honey. For a leaflet describing it, our **Trumpet,** or any information write to Lucy MacGill.

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title is Charles Tekeyan—a young man whose name has been bruited about in avant-garde circles. According to the jacket copy, "he is very near to being a hybrid of Sherwood Anderson and F. Scott Fitzgerald, with his roots in James Joyce."

But the reader who would simply settle for another Arlen or another Saroyan will also be disappointed by these stories. Tekeyan shares sentimentality with Arlen and an adolescent conceit with Saroyan, but he lacks any of their distinctive ability to spin a tale, Arlen's knowledge of the world or Saroyan's aggressively compassionate pyrotechnics. The only talent he seems to have learned from his predecessors is the ability to find good titles for his stories: "The Passionate Tennis Player," "The Worlding and the Nun," "My Pulitzer Prize," "Why the Bronx Express," "The Hot Muchacho." The names alone recall Saroyan in his heyday as a Daring Young Man on a Flying Trapeze.

DONALD DEMAREST.

Westward Expansion. Ray Allen Billington. Macmillan. $8.50.

PRECISELY why the jacket of the trade edition of this volume (also available in a college edition at $6.25) proclaims it to be the "first history of the frontier to be based on Professor Turner's epoch-making theory of the significance of the frontier in shaping American genius" is difficult to say. In his Preface, Dr. Billington proclaims his indebtedness to the late Professor Frederic L. Paxson, at one time a member of the faculty at the University of Wisconsin. The reviewer did graduate work under the same professor and was certainly made aware, as was the author of the book being reviewed, that Paxson subscribed to the frontier theory proclaimed by Turner in 1893. Paxson's own book, *History of the American Frontier,* published in 1924, was based on Turner's theories. It can hardly be said that Riegel and Clark, in their books on the history of the west, were uninfluenced by the same doctrine.

It is far more accurate to say that this is one more book, and an excellent one, too, that tends to keep alive the Turner theories. If these statements are not pushed to extremes, and their author perhaps never intended that they should be, they seem to aid in explaining the story of America as she expanded from Massachusetts to California. Professor Billington has given us information on various frontier developments which have been for the most part neglected by earlier writers. Really excellent accounts are given, for example, of the early appearance of frontier problems in colonial Virginia; the accomplishments of George Rogers Clark in Illinois in 1778-1779 have seldom been more clearly outlined; the plight of the Cherokee Indians in Georgia is made understandable; the reasons why some western states repudiated their debts are honestly analyzed. There is much excellent material not ordinarily found in similar accounts about the western missions, especially about those in Oregon. Much biographical material is included so that men and women as well as economic forces are kept constantly before the reader. Enough of politics is introduced to serve the author's purpose, but the book is much more than political history. The extensive bibliography and the detailed index attest to the scholarliness of this valuable addition to American history.

PAUL KINIERY.

Holy Wisdom. Augustine Baker, O.S.B. Harper. $5.00.
The Interior Life. Joseph Tissot. Newman. $3.00.

IT IS ALWAYS a heartening experience to see a religious book, once out of print, come from the press again. For it testifies that publishers still have confidence in the appeal of the spirit. And it suggests that a segment of the reading public attends as yet to lessons from the past. In the instance of the two reprints here reviewed, both confidence and attention find their warrant.

The prestige of Father Baker is not of yesterday. The man himself died in 1641, a martyr, except for the scaffold, of the Penal Laws against English Catholics. Sixteen years later, his friend Father Serenus Cressy put his book together from scattered treatises. From the first it assumed the proportions of a classic. Here and there, indeed, voices were raised against what was thought to be its Quietism, but the charges were shown unfounded and whatever difficulties have lingered are here dispelled by a judicious editor. If there is one spirit which characterizes the work it is its breadth of view. The book smacks not at all of rigid systemization nor of the petty tyranny of schools. Rather does it give forth the sanity and balance traditional with the Order of St. Benedict to which Father Baker belonged. For those whom both qualities delight, these pages will prove a treasure.

The smaller volume edited by Father Tissot first was the light in Lyons in 1894 and was done into English twenty years later. It is an essay of considerable excellence and quite succeeds in putting the fundamentals of Christian spirituality in compact form. But it fails to achieve the nice balance of Father Baker's work. For its chief concern is rather with the contemplative than with the commoner sort of Christian. That is understandable enough in the circumstances of its composition. The translator should have taken the trouble to say that the treatise was penned by an unnamed Carthusian in Calabria who sent his manuscript to Father Tissot to edit for him.

HENRY G. J. BECK.

Chaucer. G. K. Chesterton. Pellegrini & Cudahy. $3.75.

IT IS NOT quite clear why this book should have been reissued after fifteen years when there are other Chesterton books—ranging from his *Dickens* to his *Cobbett* to choose from. Perhaps the reason is that none of the others was permitted to pass into the hands of a new publisher. But lest the surprise I have expressed be taken as conveying disparagement, I confess that, on a second reading, the Chaucer experts seem now to have mauled the book too severely in 1934, and may feel that they might well modify their opinions after this lapse of time. One does not expect of Chesterton that he make any specialized contribution to scholarship—and Chaucer is a very specialized field indeed; what he provides is a

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broad handling of the general scene with flashes of penetrating insight at particular points. I do not know where one would find a better introductory volume on Chaucer, for that by Robert Dudley French, though in one sense more learned than Chesterton's, is really a handbook and not a biography, whereas Chesterton, without ignoring the criticism of most, if not all, of Chaucer's works, provides an understanding that the myopic Middle English specialist rarely if ever achieves. The real root of the trouble is that the poet—and particularly the poet's religion—is too often looked upon as a department of archaeology, whereas Chesterton, whatever the defects of his scholarship, has an interpretive insight and a power to make fourteenth century England, like the poet, become alive. As one who shares Chaucer's religion he has a great advantage over the earnest professors.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

Call It Treason. George Howe. Viking. $3.00.

THIS IS A fascinating description of the techniques used by United States Forces to land agents behind German lines, and a remarkably detailed description of Germany and the German Army immediately before V-E Day. Unfortunately, the book's interest ends there. It is hardly a novel, if a novel is a work of art dealing with human beings concerned with human problems. In fact, it is most surprising that a book with this one's lack of character and depth should have been chosen as the Christopher Prize Novel. It is a good adventure story, but the excitement comes from the various tight spots which Mr. Howe pushes his people into, and by various timely coincidences, out of again. It has nothing to do with what it really means to a man to be hunted by the SS, or (in spite of Mr. Howe's title and good intentions) with what it means to a young and thoughtful man to be an enemy agent in his own country; to be directing bombers to his own people. *Call It Treason* is seriously intended, is elaborately terse, brilliantly detailed—and both meaningless and harmlesss.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

Authorized White Book, Cardinal Mindszenty Speaks. Longmans. $2.50.

IN FEBRUARY 1949, Longmans, Green & Co. examined a book published in German in Zurich by the well-known house of Thomas Verlag; a collection of papers selected by Cardinal Mindszenty to be made public in foreign countries as a "White Book," in the event of his anticipated arrest. Longmans became involved in negotiations that finally enabled them in April to come into possession of the original group of Hungarian documents that the Cardinal had prepared. The more important papers chosen from the Cardinal's collection are included in this book, and the Introduction and the "connection links" in italics among the documents were especially prepared for this American edition by Akos Zombory.

The publication contains the account of the four years of relentless battle against the Catholic Church in Hungary by the Communists and gives the facts on which will be based the verdict of history. It is far from exhaustive,

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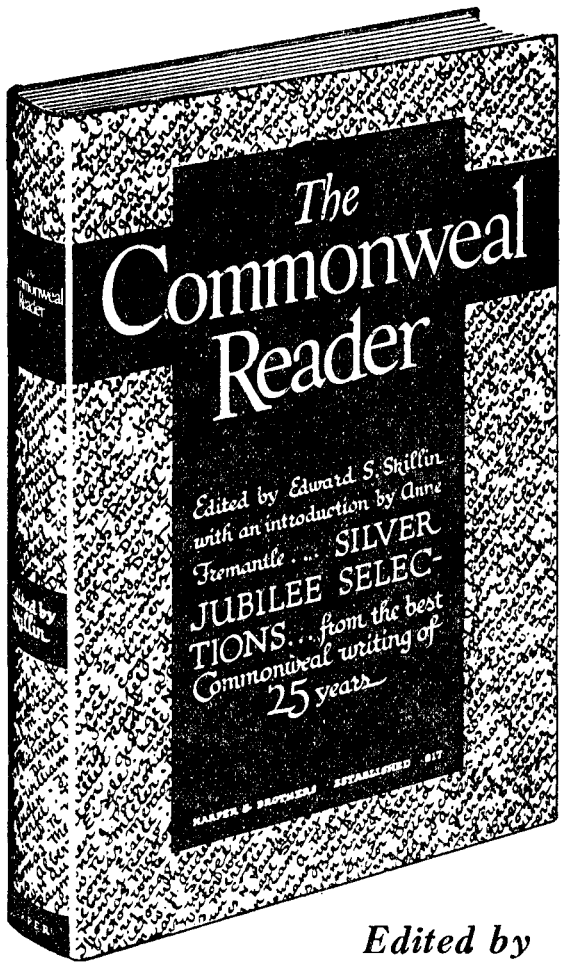
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EDWARD S. SKILLIN

INTRODUCTION BY ANNE FREMANTLE

● In twenty-five years, *The Commonweal* has published many short pieces of writing of permanent value by some of the great names of this generation. Here is a selection of forty-six pieces by such writers as: Thomas Merton, Padraic Colum, Franz Werfel, Michael Williams, Nicholas A. Berdyaev, John A. Ryan, Dorothy Day, Jesse Stuart, W. H. Auden, Robert Lowell. Mr. Skillin is the present editor of *The Commonweal.*

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to be sure, but the final result is a praiseworthy jumping off place for the student who is interested in the ways and means utilized by the Communists in their expansion on the Danube. Incidentally, Zombory's comments are good summaries of Hungary's history, although here and there his translation of the documents makes queer English. JOSEPH S. ROUCEK.

Thomas Jefferson and American Democracy, Max Beloff; Abraham Lincoln and the United States, K. C. Wheare; Warren Hastings and India, Penderel Moon; Raleigh and the British Empire, D. B. Quinn; Constantine and the Conversion of Europe, A. H. M. Jones; Pericles and Athens, A. R. Burn. Teach Yourself Library. Macmillan. $2 per vol.

SOME FORTY-ODD volumes have so far been issued in this excellent series intended for the average reader who wants to know a little something of history without delving into the depths of specialism Of the latest six additions, the Pericles and Constantine volumes are likely to interest the special reader as well, if only because there are fewer books available on these subjects and those which are available are a little too recondite for those less acquainted with Greek and Roman cultures as a whole. The titles speak for themselves, and all that need be said is that, to reach the large public for whom these books are intended, the authors have deliberately written with a simplicity and clarity wholly commendable. It is perhaps an encouraging fact that the general public is no longer looked down upon and that its interests are looked after by eminent scholars cooperating with recognized publishers. JOHN COURNOS.

CONTRIBUTORS

Charles Henry LEE is a New York attorney formerly associated with the State Department.

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Harry FLANNERY is a newspaperman in Los Angeles and the author of "Assignment in Berlin."

Max FISCHER in 1920 published in Mainz, "August Strinberg — Contribution Toward the Understanding of the Religious Psyche of Our Time."

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John COURNOS is a critic and short story anthologist.

BOOKS FOR YOUR LIBRARY

A basic list of books for home or parish libraries explaining Catholic belief and practice has been prepared by Dr. John A. O'Brien. A copy may be had by sending a card to Ann O'Hagan, The Thomas More Association, 210 West Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill.

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Educational Directory

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